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REMARKS

Claims 2-4, 7-18, and 21-30 remain pending in the present application.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over McGinty et al. or Harriss et al.
in view of Blades**

Claims 2-4, 7-18, and 24-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious in view of either McGinty et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,010,970) or alternatively over Harriss et al. (WO 98/39509) in view of Blades (U.S. Patent No. 3,081,519). Applicants traverse these bases for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Initially, Applicants submit that McGinty et al. is unavailable as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103(c), since it is co-assigned to the assignee of the present application (reel 009322/frame 0035), and published after the priority date of the present application. As such, Applicants will address the deficiencies of the base reference Harriss et al., as it has an earlier publication date. Applicants' comments should be deemed to apply equally to McGinty et al., to the extent it might be applicable as prior art, since as discussed in Applicants' prior response, the portion of the McGinty et al. disclosure relied upon by the Examiner is identical to that of Harriss et al.

As previously discussed, the Examiner relies on Comparative Example 1 of Harriss et al. as disclosing the flash spinning of 18.7 wt% high-density polyethylene (PE) from a mixed pentane/cyclopentane spin agent at 185°C (p. 17, lines 23-32); and on Blades at column 13, lines 15-60, to suggest flash spinning at temperatures from 190°C to 216°C. The Examiner argues that the skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify the teachings of Harriss et al. as to spinning temperature in view of the Blades disclosure of higher spinning temperatures to obtain plexifilamentary webs having "opacity, smoothness, softness, quietness, and strength". Applicants reiterate their arguments in traverse of this combination of references as set forth in their previous response.

Further, Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to independent claims 28-30, each of which contains a limitation directed to the maximum surface area of the fibers and fabrics therein: "less than 10 m²/g"; and to claims 2 and 3, which specify even lower surface areas: "less than 8 m²/g", and "less than 5 m²/g", respectively. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references, neither alone nor in

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combination, would lead the skilled artisan to expect that increasing the flash spinning temperature according to the present claims would result in a diminution of the surface area of flash spun fibers and fabrics.

Harriss et al. is entirely silent as to surface area, while Blades discloses that his plexifilamentary strands have surface areas greater than 2 m²/g (col. 5, lines 14-15). The only actual measurements of strand surface areas in Blades are in Examples VI (col. 13, lines 72-74) and XII (col. 15, lines 54-55), having measured surface areas of 8.5 m²/g and 12.4 m²/g, respectively. However, those examples of Blades were conducted under quite different conditions than claimed in the present application. Both were conducted in methylene chloride spin agents, with Example VI conducted at a spinning temperature of 200°C, and Example XII at 225°C. Applicants again submit that the skilled artisan could draw no conclusions as to fiber and fabric surface areas obtainable when using a mixed hydrocarbon spin agent from the data of Blades, which is derived from using a chlorinated hydrocarbon spin agent.

But to the extent that the skilled artisan would have, *arguendo*, looked to Blades for guidance in modifying Harriss et al., she would have concluded that an increase in spinning temperature would result in an increase in fiber surface area; precisely the opposite of what is disclosed in the present application.

Applying such logic to Comparative Example 1 of Harriss et al., one would expect that increasing the spinning temperature to the presently claimed ranges would increase the surface area of the filaments made therein. The Examiner's attention is directed to the spinning parameters of Harriss et al.'s Comparative Example 1 (page 17, lines 23-31), and to Comparative Example C of the present application (page 27, Table 3), which very closely reflects the spinning conditions of the Harriss et al. Comparative Example 1:

	Harriss et al. CE 1	Present Application CE B
[polymer] (wt%)	18.7	18
Spin agent	32% cyclo-C5/68% n-C5	40% cyclo-C5/60% n-C5*
Polymer	HD PE of MI= 0.7g/10 min	HD PE of MI= 0.7g/10 min*
Spin temp. (°C)	185	185
Let down pressure (psi)	900	700
Surface area (m ² /g)	Not reported	19.73

* see page 20, lines 23-30

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Thus, it would appear that the Harriss et al. Comparative Example 1, cited by the Examiner as most relevant to the present claims, has a fiber surface area far in excess of the present claim limitation of "less than $10 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ ", and that any suggestion in Blades to increase spinning temperatures would lead the skilled artisan to expect even higher surface areas.

Accordingly, the skilled artisan would not have had any expectation of success in drastically decreasing the Harriss et al. fiber surface areas to less than $10 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ by increasing spinning temperatures, i.e. from 185°C for PE in pentane/cyclopentane, to between about 205°C and 220°C (as claimed herein), based upon the Blades disclosure of spinning temperatures for flash spinning PE in a methylene chloride spin agent.

Withdrawal of the rejection based upon failure to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness is requested.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over McGinty et al.
in view of Blades and further in view of Bisbis et al.**

Claims 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious in view of either McGinty et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,010,970) or alternatively over Harriss et al. (WO 98/39509) in view of Blades and further in view of Bisbis et al. Applicants traverse these bases for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

In view of the impropriety of the rejection over McGinty et al. or Harriss et al. in view of Blades et al., as set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Bisbis et al. fails to provide any further motivation to cure the deficiencies of the other cited references as to the present claims.

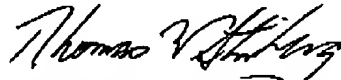
Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

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In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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